WHOLE EARTH CONTENT MEMO
From David Bolling

Some preliminary thoughts on the subject of re-launching Whole Earth:

I. The Whole Earth Identity

Rather than defining this exercise in terms of what *Whole Earth* should be, I prefer to begin by trying to describe what *Whole Earth* already is. I think we all agree that Whole Earth's existing identity, its heritage and tradition, are things that have enduring value. That's the base I would build on.

So here is my attempt to describe what Whole Earth is, or has been, or in some cases, should become again:

- Whole Earth is intelligent, independent, irreverent, practical, credible, visionary, personal and fun.

- It is a compass pointing the direction to both new and old things of value.

- It seeks, explores and explains patterns, and it helps reveal the connections that link the multiple parts of life on Earth.

- Each time you read Whole Earth you not only learn things you didn't know before, you learn things that excite you and that you can apply in a practical way to your life.

- Whole Earth is loved, in part, because it constantly risks rejection. It doesn't play safe.

- Whole Earth is not a designer's showcase, it is a showcase for design: in nature, in space, in housing, in transportation, in learning, in playing, in technology, in the science of sustainability.

- Whole Earth readers are people who know that the key choices they make will determine the future of life on Earth.

- The mission of Whole Earth is to help people take responsibility for their own education and their own decisions, to learn how to live sustainable lives, if they choose to do so.

2. Content Organization

It doesn't matter to me so much what we call the domains of Whole Earth – the names should be compelling without being too clever – but the categories themselves are hugely important: These would be my candidates, whatever the ultimate domain name attached. Not every domain would appear in every issue.

- **Voices:** Interviews/profiles of exceptional, intriguing, provocative, visionary people. There should be one in every issue. The *Whole Earth* interview should become more famous than the *Playboy* interview.
- **Places:** The Whole Earth version of a travel page. Places that are exceptional for their ecological, cultural, geological, recreational, political, aesthetic and spiritual values. For each place there would be information on vital statistics, access, unique importance, connection to the rest of the Earth, key resources, current state of socio-political-economic health.
- **Species:** Tracking the discovery, loss, recovery and threats to species of all kinds.
- **Cultures:** Reports from the ethnosphere, illuminating the complex tapestry of diverse peoples and the unique contributions of each highlighted culture.
- **Connections:** Each issue presents an example of a key connection in the biological, economic, political, social, technological and spiritual fabric of the Earth. Pull this string here and it's connected to this one over here, which is connected to…
- **Changes:** Charting the key changes that are shaping life on earth. Things that have changed, things that are starting to change, things that will be changing.
- **Conflicts/Causes/Solutions:** Whole Earth periodically highlights a conflict somewhere on the planet, provides succinct analysis of causes and solutions, and projects impacts from each conflict onto the rest of the world. Each conflict focus is augmented by comprehensive access information from relevant experts.
- **Motion:** Technologies, philosophies and policies for moving people, things, energy, information. From hypercars to distributed power to Wi-Fi networks.

- **Money:** Economics - personal, national and global. Making sense of the micro and macro economies that drive the world. Shedding light on global income distribution, national debt and globalization.
- **Energy:** A relentless commitment to finding and telling the truth about energy options and opportunities, and explaining why renewable, affordable, available technology is not in more widespread use.
- **Data:** A regular compilation of important and intriguing data that enriches our understanding of planetary/social realities.
- **Populations:** Perhaps a subset of the data domain. Regular insights into population statistics, carrying capacity, birth/death rates, density, cultural survival, etc.
- **Folly:** Ongoing examples of human idiocy.
- **Favorites:** Each issue, half a dozen people – both famous and obscure - describe their favorite stuff – from books and music to tools and toys and everything in between.
- **Play:** A fresh look at recreation, leisure, games, arts, entertainment
- **Beauty:** A showcase of images and words that lift and inspire the spirit.
- **Events:** A calendar of important events around the globe and access info for getting there.
- **Feedback:** An expanded and much-better designed letters section.
- **Contributors Page:** Let's do a better job of highlighting contributors with a photo/bio page showing who they are.

III. Strategies

Part of Whole Earth's proactive, information gathering strategy should be to more aggressively seek out new voices and ideas rather than simply waiting for them to come in the door. That means identifying the key thinkers within each domain of creative thought; it means combing professional associations, organizations, academic laboratories, corporate think tanks, along with the secluded corners and outer edges of research to identify the nascent outlines of the future. It's about charting the development of future-thinking visionary ideas, practices and tools.